

# PROHIBITION AS A "WAR ACT" AND SOME THINGS IT CAN'T DO

(BY H. D. S.)

A MOVEMENT initiated by former governor Eugene N. Foss of Massachusetts and Prof. Irving Fisher of Yale university to have congress at once enact legislation providing for national prohibition against the liquor traffic, as a war measure, is receiving wide commendation. It goes further than a war measure, however. It aims at prohibition not only during the war but always afterward, one gathers from a memorial with 1000 signers presented to congress, and reading as follows:

"In view of the scientifically proved unfavorable effects of the use of alcoholic beverages even in small quantities; and in view of the great and rapid growth of public knowledge and sentiment on this subject as shown by anti alcohol agitation and legislation through most of our national areas;

"And in view of the inadequacy of all methods hitherto employed to check or regulate these evils;

"And in view of the great and rapid growth of public knowledge and sentiment on this subject as shown by anti alcohol agitation and legislation through most of our national areas;

"The undersigned believe the time has come for the federal government to take steps looking to the prohibition in the United States of the manufacture, sale, import, export, and transport of alcoholic beverages."

The memorial explains that the last paragraph does not apply to alcoholic liquors used for medicinal, sacramental, or industrial purposes.

The memorial, 1000 signers are leaders in all walks of life. Scientists, railroad presidents, university heads, capitalists, leaders of organized labor, men of letters, big industrial organizers, leaders at the bar and in medicine are all to be found in the list. Every state in the union is represented.

The question is becoming acute in a national sense. Many conscientious opponents of state prohibition would not resist national prohibition. Once in force, it will be hard to abandon it. Many people will take the stand that it is worth while as a temporary expedient when the nation needs sobriety to avoid military disaster, it will be worth while at every other time.

Prohibition is almost essential in time of war—quite essential if a nation's resources are really put to the test. One of Russia's first acts was to put the ban on vodka. This was followed by drastic regulations which have only lately been modified slightly in favor of home grown wines of low alcoholic content. Germany long since ceased manufacturing beer save in small quantities for specific uses. The country could not spare the grain. Because munitions workers, other factory employees, ship builders and coal miners were losing valuable time through drinking, England has made stringent regulations covering the use of liquor and is almost on a prohibition basis. The king and most of the court circle set an example for the nation by banishing liquor from their establishments. France is also virtually on a prohibition basis. All the countries which are bearing the heavier burdens of the war have cast aside liquor in order to keep minds and bodies free of the disabling effect of alcohol and to conserve for food the materials which go into liquor making.

For the United States, the chief arguments for prohibition as a war measure are given by the signers of the memorial to congress above referred to, as follows:

1. Food saving in grain which would afford a loaf of bread a day for an army of 11,000,000 men.

2. Protecting the army and navy from the diseases which proved so disastrous abroad until liquor was banished from the camps of the chief belligerent countries, for liquor lowers the vitality and the power to withstand disease.

3. Promoting efficiency in the production of war materials, for liquor tempts men away from their work. By intoxication they are rendered unfit for immediate service and their ability to perform good service is reduced by the after effects. A munition maker drunk and away from his job means just that much more delay in the delivery of a gun or of rifle ammunition or shells. Edison's statement that "alcohol in man is like sand in an engine's bearings" is a striking way to express an opinion on the subject.

Of course it must be admitted that national prohibition as a mere temporary expedient is practically impossible in this country. If the action is once taken, it will have all the effects of finality, so far as the various branches of the liquor industry itself are concerned, for it would not be practical to conserve the investments or keep organizations together. The same interests that have fought and will fight national prohibition in peace time, will fight the war time proposal with equal vigor.

Advocates of national prohibition see in the war time

proposal a means of avoiding a constitutional amendment and of saving time; they also realize the value of taking advantage of war time feeling and the experience of European countries, where drastic liquor regulations have been put in force out of dire necessity and quite without regard to any majority sentiment in the mass of the people.

Congress might act now, and later on introduce modifications. But the prohibition fight, which has dominated politics in many states, has hidden legislatures, and has overshadowed all other issues in many senatorial contests, has hitherto been kept out of congress. Once introduced there, in the form now proposed, the question would become the dominant one. Strictly as a war measure, when convinced of its necessity the people would stand for it, as they have in other countries. But if the people suspect that this is only a new move of the prohibition element to take shrewd advantage of the war in order to press their propaganda, they will shy at it. When the president of the United States and his official advisers declare national prohibition to be necessary as a war measure, the nation will accept their judgment and act accordingly. But it seems as if the initiative must come from the executive branch of the government, in order to avoid the appearance of merely transferring state prohibition fights into the national congress at a time when that body must confine itself strictly to war measures of imperative urgency.

The people of the United States spend several times as much for liquor as they do for education—for all education, public and private, higher and lower. Perhaps if they spent more money and more intelligence on education, there would be less disposition to waste money on liquor. Excessive use of liquor is as much the result of ignorance as it is of depravity. It is an indication of ill health and undernourishment as well as a cause thereof. It is a result of unschooled moral sense as well as a cause of immorality. Prohibition alone will not transform a people or a nation; there must be effective constructive work from below, a solid groundwork of character building and education. The United States and the British Isles consume more alcohol per capita than any other nations on earth, yet they esteem themselves the most virtuous. The Turks are prohibitionists, very abstemious, the use of alcohol is interdicted by their religion, yet their moral virtues are not at this moment highly esteemed by the western world.

Excessive use of alcoholic liquors is as immoral as any other excess, and it is the direct cause of much of our immorality, leading to crimes against the family and against the public peace and welfare. But the people of this country are pretty evenly divided on the main question of general prohibition. Perhaps there are 25,000,000 adult men and women remaining to be convinced. The question is not one to be settled as easily as licking a postage stamp, or voting \$7,000,000,000 for war purposes. But the trend is steadily toward prohibition. A majority will before a great while favor it, and the others, especially the liquor interests if they are wise, will actively prepare for the day when their trade and their indulgence will be outlawed.

All the good you can't create strong characters by law. You can withhold temptation, but that is negative. There must be more positive effort to build up moral stamina among the people. The people who "can afford to get drunk" are seldom the ones who get drunk. The highly educated, the most successful business men and professional men, have trained themselves to avoid excesses of all kinds, liquor included. More practical education and training among the less fortunate, the less well endowed, must accompany the withholding of temptation to alcoholic excess, or there will be a drift into new and perhaps worse excesses.

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# AS IMPORTANT AS BULLETS By COFFMAN

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# Abe Martin



Tilford Moots an' family are tryin' rice this week. There's too many folks with opinions an' no information.

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# Short Snatches From Everywhere

Ha, ha, just think of the poor dubs who are getting married to keep out of war.—Pittsburg Post.

The sacrifice of friendships as war comes on is another item in the price that staggers humanity.—Washington Star.

Senator Stone, who boasted of talking in the president's ear, has just been told that he has no more to say in the future.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

If the men who made the first moves that precipitated the great European war could have foreseen, it would doubtless have been different. Their purpose was to strengthen royalty—not to weaken it.—Omaha Bee.

The Mexican adventure may look promising to the Hohenzollerns, but if they will inquire of the Hapsburg family, which attempted to domesticate a claim in that country once, they may learn something to their advantage.—Kansas City Times.

# HOGWALLOW LOCALS By GEORGE BINGHAM

Now is the time for every good citizen to come to the aid of his reputation and exclaim that he has brains that tall.

When a person shaves himself he does not have to be asked if the razor pulls.

The Wild Onion school teacher has made up his mind to continue at the head of the school for another term, as he has just had a chance through an advertisement in a family magazine to make big money at home without work, by simply selling some article that should be in every household as a matter of course.

He is an educator that sits on a high limb in the tree of knowledge. Each morning he carries his dinner to school in a tin bucket, and at high noon he eats his cold-hard-boiled eggs with due resignation, while he pours his molasses out of the big-mouthed quinine bottle on to his soda biscuits; and while thus doing he realizes he is doing no more than many another pioneer educator who in the early days struggled and died of stomach complaint in behalf of education.

happened to have in their storeroom the due used, when the present mayor father was in the office. This was dug out, without any expense to the city, and, furthermore, the firm was able to deliver the letter heads bearing the name of the new mayor the day he took office.

Two carloads of salmon were shipped by an El Paso firm this week to the British army in Europe. The shipment was made by the Western Grocery company, and the total sale price is about \$28,000. The firm purchased the salmon several months ago, when prices were low, and in turning the goods over at the present prices, is said to have made quite a tidy sum.

The salmon were shipped yesterday over the El Paso & Southwestern railroad to New York, where the consignments will be forwarded by boat to the British army in France.

Equal suffragists are taking advantage of the war situation further their cause in every possible way. The following letter from